

WHITE HOUSE
FAITH-BASED
AND
COMMUNITY
INITIATIVES



“Governments shouldn't discriminate against faith, government should welcome faith, the power of faith, whether it comes through the Christian church, through Judaism, or through Islam, can change people's lives for the better. And we must welcome that faith in our society.”

*President George W. Bush,
August 7, 2002*

President Bush's Faith-Based & Community Initiative

Our country is blessed with a long tradition and honorable commitment to assisting individuals, families, and communities who have not fully shared in America's prosperity. But despite efforts by the Federal and State governments to battle social distress, too many of our neighbors still suffer from poverty and despair. In every corner of America, people of all ages and walks of life are calling out for help.

- Around 13.6 million children under the age of 12 – almost a third of America's young people – go hungry
- More than 5 million seniors were below or near the poverty level in 1999
- Last year, 16.6 million Americans had substance abuse problems
- More than 2 million children have a parent in prison

For years, faith-based and community groups have been assisting these people and others in need. They have transformed lives with their compassion and are America's unsung heroes – healing our country's ills one heart and one act of kindness at a time.

Unfortunately, the Federal government has often not been a willing partner to these faith-based and community groups. Instead, it has put in place complicated rules and regulations that hinder these groups from competing for Federal funds on an equal footing with other, larger charities. President Bush wants to change this. He believes that all groups – faith-based or secular, large or small – should compete on a level playing field, so long as they obey all legal requirements. That is the reason for the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative and why it is one of his top domestic priorities.



The White House Office and the Agency Centers collaborate closely to support the essential work of all charities. Their goal is to make sure that effective faith-based and community organizations compete on an equal footing for Federal dollars, face fewer bureaucratic barriers, and receive greater private support.

WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

One of President Bush's first official acts as President was to create the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The Office was tasked at its inception with leading a "determined attack on need" by strengthening and expanding the role of faith-based and community organizations in addressing the nation's social problems. The President envisions a faith-friendly public square where faith-based organizations can compete equally with other groups to provide government or privately-funded services.

President Bush also created Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in seven Federal agencies - the United States Departments of Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education and the Agency for International Development - to promote the Initiative.

Activities of the White House Office

- Working legislatively to encourage the good works of faith-based and community organizations and give them the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete for Federal funding
- Identifying and eliminating improper Federal barriers to the full participation of faith-based and community-serving programs in the provision of social services
- Encouraging greater corporate and philanthropic support for faith-based and community organizations, through public education and outreach activities

Priority Areas

The White House Office strives to support organizations that serve people in need, particularly those that serve the following populations:

- At-risk youth and prisoners
- Elders in need
- Homeless
- Substance abusers
- Welfare-to-work families

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCES ON FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

The White House Conferences on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives will provide participants with information about the Federal funding process, available funding opportunities, the requirements that come with the receipt of Federal funds, and cutting-edge practices from other organizations. The White House is hosting the Conferences with support from the Departments of Justice, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education.

RESOURCES FOR GRASSROOTS GROUPS SEEKING FEDERAL FUNDS

Every year, the Federal government spends billions of dollars for health and human service programs. There are thousands of faith-based and community organizations across the country that receive Federal funds. Although the use of government money by faith-based and community organizations is not new, there are many small grassroots organizations that still have questions about the Federal funding process. They wonder, “How can we find out about Federal funding opportunities?” They ask, “If we get money from the Federal government, what legal requirements will we have to follow?”

The White House Office and the seven Agency Centers can help.

Internet Resources – The White House Office has put together a list of more than 100 Federal programs that your organization may be interested in. You can use this list, which is available at www.fbc.gov, as a starting point for learning more about specific programs. The Agency Centers’ web sites contain more information about specific initiatives and programs operated by their Department.

Legal Guidance – The White House Office web site also offers some guidelines on the legal requirements that can come along with Federal funding. These “do’s” and “don’ts” answer some of the questions that faith-based and community groups most frequently ask.

Compassion Capital Fund – Assistance may also be available from one of the nearly two dozen organizations funded by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Compassion Capital Fund. These organizations help small faith-based and community groups learn about the Federal grants process. They may also help small groups with other challenges, such as training volunteers and staff or expanding the reach of the services they provide. Organizations funded by the Compassion Capital Fund do this at no cost to your organization. You can learn more about the Compassion Capital Fund and the organizations it funds at www.hhs.gov/fbc.



“I’m a strong proponent of faith-based groups in America, because they’re reclaiming America one block at a time. They’re helping save one life at a time. They understand the power of changing a person’s heart is a way to freedom and independence and to better behavior. Our government should not fear faith-based programs in America, we ought to welcome them. Faith-based programs ought to be treated equally with non-faith-based programs. We ought not to ask the question, “who,” we ought to ask the question, “what works?” If your program is a faith-based program and it changes people’s lives, and they become less addicted, we ought to say thank you, and you can have equal access to money, and you don’t even have to change your mission.”

President George W. Bush, July 29, 2002

SOME BASIC FACTS ABOUT FEDERAL GRANTS

The Federal government uses two kinds of grants.

1 There are grants handed out by an agency of the Federal government (also known as ‘discretionary’ grants). An example of this type of grant is a homeless assistance grant given out by the Department of Health and Human Services to a homeless shelter.

2 There are grants that put Federal money in the hands of States, cities, or counties for them to distribute to charities and other social service providers, usually under their own rules and regulations (also known as ‘formula’ or ‘block’ grants).

Therefore, you can apply directly to the Federal government or you can apply to a State or locality that distributes money it receives from the Federal government.

An Important Point – Much more money is available from programs administered by States and localities than from the Federal government. For example, in 2001, the Department of Health and Human Services awarded \$25 billion directly to grant applicants. But it gave more than six times as much (\$160 billion) to States and localities, which in turn made much of this money available to non-governmental organizations.



“Find a child who cannot read, and teach him to read. Find a child who might be hopeless and lost, and put your arm around him and tell him you love him. Unleash the great power of faith in our society. I strongly believe in faith-based institutions because I know that faith can change hearts for the better.”

President George W. Bush, July 15, 2002

Important Contact Information

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Department of Labor
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Department of Health and
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For further information regarding the
Agency for International Development
Center for the Initiative, visit www.usaid.gov.